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LETTER DATED 3 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

In accordance with instructions I have received, I would request you to circulate the text of the enclosed statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic on 3 March 1997 as a document of the Security Council (see annex).

(Signed) Eldar G. KOULIEV
Permanent Representative

97-05588 (E) 040397

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Annex

Statement dated 3 March 1997 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan

[Original: Russian]

On 21 February 1997, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic issued a statement (S/1997/147) in connection with the illegal deliveries of Russian weapons to the Republic of Armenia which had been made public by the Minister for Commonwealth Affairs of the Government of the Russian Federation, Aman Tuleev. According to the information provided by Mr. Tuleev, in the past two years, Armenia has illegally obtained 84 T-72 tanks and 50 infantry fighting vehicles and spare parts.

The Azerbaijani side is particularly concerned at the fact that these illegal deliveries, which are in violation of the norms of international law and the principles for the peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, were made to Armenia - a country which carried out aggression against the Azerbaijani Republic, occupied 20 per cent of its territory and drove more than a million Azerbaijanis from their homes. The illegal deliveries to the Republic of Armenia are also in flagrant violation of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and complicate the search for ways to solve, within the framework of the Treaty, the problems that exist.

Azerbaijan has urgently called upon all the States parties to the Treaty, first of all, the Russian Federation, to take all appropriate measures in order to identify and remove the illegal weapons.

The Azerbaijani Republic has called upon the Republic of Armenia to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict and reject the policy of building up its military potential.

Unfortunately, to date there has been no official response on the part of the Government of the Russian Federation.

The statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on 28 February 1997 (S/1997/179), which attempts to accuse Azerbaijan, without providing any proof, of committing the very acts which indeed constitute the essence of Armenia's policy, is cause for astonishment. The question arises, as to who is preparing for war: the one who is illegally and secretly acquiring weapons and deploying them in the territory of a neighbouring State occupied as a result of armed aggression, or the one who is drawing the attention of the world community to those illegal actions?

The incidents that were made public by Aman Tuleev are by far not the only ones and, as is demonstrated by the reaction of officials in Yerevan, not the last indication of Armenia's ongoing military preparations aimed at expanding its military potential and consolidating the results of its armed aggression.

According to reliable information obtained by the Azerbaijani Republic, Armenia possesses missile systems with a 300-kilometre range and a nuclear-strike capability. In order to acquire practical experience in the technical maintenance and use of these missiles, 20 servicemen from the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, whose names are also known to the Azerbaijani side, were trained at one of the training bases of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation in the vicinity of Moscow in Kapustin Yar. Although further such facts could be cited, what has already been stated demonstrates with sufficient eloquence, that Armenia is continuing to develop its military potential in order to prepare for a further cycle of aggression against the Azerbaijani Republic.

One can only be astounded by the insincerity with which the Republic of Armenia declares its non-involvement in such activities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic has been authorized to state that the Azerbaijani Republic continues to be committed to a peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and is prepared for the speediest resumption of negotiations by the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the basis of the principles for a settlement adopted at the OSCE Lisbon Summit.

The Azerbaijani Republic expects active steps on the part of the Government of the Russian Federation in order to halt the practice of illegal weapons deliveries, eliminate its consequences and also prevent the recurrence of such acts in the future.